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ABSTRACT

This "Guide" is intended for staff developers and assessment planners already familiar with current educational assessment reform. Performance assessment means measuring the growth or achievement of one student's performance against an established set of standards for quality, the "performance standards." Students usually demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by completing a performance task. The focus of this guide is to ensure that the language and cultural demands of performance tasks are understood and considered during development, administration, and interpretation. Part 1 of the "Guide" provides background information related to the role of language and culture in performance assessment. Part 2 focuses more closely on adaptation or development of the performance tasks themselves and includes sample tasks. Part 3 suggests a workshop for staff developers to promote awareness of assessment principles and procedures. Eight transparencies are illustrated in the text, and the templates for these transparencies are presented in an appendix. (Contains 3 figures and 33 references.) (SLD)

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GUIDE TO DEVELOPING EQUITABLE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

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GUIDE TO DEVELOPING EQUITABLE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

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OVERVIEW

This *Guide* is intended for staff developers and assessment planners already familiar with current assessment reform. For others, the *Guide* will offer some support, but educators will certainly need additional resources for a full picture. Other products developed by the Rural Schools Assistance Program of the Far West Laboratory can be used in conjunction with the *Guide*, e.g., the videotape on linking assessments to local contexts and the two Knowledge Briefs on alternative assessment (listed in the Suggested Readings section). We encourage readers to review articles and books listed in this section to supplement their own background. In the *Guide*, we have attempted to compile resources we ourselves have designed for in-service workshops and ongoing consultation with schools, so that others may experiment with them and modify them for their own purposes. In addition, we have built a context for the sample tasks and the workshop materials. We acknowledge that the *Guide* alone is not enough for developing performance tasks that are culturally sound. But we trust that staff developers and assessment planners will find the *Guide* a useful addition to their existing resources, and that it will stimulate their thinking about these very important issues.

Performance assessment means measuring the growth or achievement of one student's performance against an established set of standards for quality, known as "performance standards." Typically, students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of important academic concepts and applications by completing a "performance task"—a focused assessment activity where students construct complex responses that demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills. The "performance task" is designed to elicit assessment data about student learning — about what a student knows and is able to do vis à vis specific "content standards." "Content standards" are broad statements about what students should learn.

As the development and use of performance-based assessments in America's schools advance, it becomes clear that there is a pressing need to consider more carefully how to ensure that these assessments will be valid for a diverse student population. The materials in the *Guide* provide some support to initiate a dialog about cultural and linguistic factors that must be considered in designing and using performance assessments. It is a dialog that needs to occur as development work is undertaken, not after the fact. An analysis of cultural and linguistic factors affecting learning and schooling must be included, because language and culture shape how people conceive of, demonstrate, and measure learning.

While the *Guide* includes information related to equity and access that must be considered throughout the development and implementation of an assessment system, its focus is to ensure that the language and cultural demands of performance tasks are understood and considered during development, administration, and interpretation. The *Guide* is divided into three somewhat independent parts that need not be read in order. Part One provides background information related to the role of language and culture in performance assessment. Users of the *Guide* who are not familiar with the subject or who need to refresh their knowledge may want to read Part One prior to staff development activities. That information will frame the introduction of assessment principles, the sample tasks, and workshop activities.

Part Two focuses more closely on adaptation or development of the performance tasks themselves. It includes background information on developing performance tasks that connect to local context, as well as including a set of strategies for developing tasks. Sample tasks, developed by classroom teachers in collaboration with Far West Laboratory staff, are included. If the reader is familiar with the concepts in Part One or interested only in task development, he or she may proceed to Part Two.

Part Three suggests a workshop with guidelines and materials for staff developers to promote awareness of assessment principles and procedures. The workshop assumes the use of the sample tasks included

in Part Two. Because the strategies and assessment tools used to develop these tasks are described in Part Two, Part Three is closely tied to that segment. It is, however, possible to use other tasks for the workshop activities. In this case, Part Three may stand alone.

The *Guide* was developed in this way to accommodate the diverse needs of readers. At this point, educators have had varying degrees of familiarity and experience with performance assessment. For readers interested in in-depth reading about language, culture, and assessment, the *Guide* may be read in its entirety. An alternative approach would be to read only those parts most useful to the user.

Educators will discover that examining performance tasks produces a range of viewpoints about what the varying demands of such tasks are. Teachers often find it difficult to step back from a content focus. For example, in looking at a mathematics task, they may naturally tend to focus on those mathematical concepts and procedures required to accomplish it. This is not surprising because most teachers have not been asked to evaluate tasks from the point of view of language demands and cultural content (beyond vocabulary analyses). We hope the *Guide* will help teachers think about how issues of language and culture can be addressed as they use existing performance assessments or create new ones. All students must negotiate meaning within the multiple contexts of school, home, and community; to assess in ways that reveal what students have learned, we must take this into account.

The *Guide* is written as a practical resource. For that reason, we have not annotated every assertion or design principle with a reference. However, our positions are grounded both in deep experience and familiarity with the research and theory underlying current alternative assessment reforms. In particular, our thinking about performance assessment criteria has been influenced by the work of Eva Baker, Robert Linn, and Joan Herman at CRESST. Howard Gardner and Dennie Palmer Wolf contributed to our understanding about the linkages between cognition, meaning making, and student performance. Writings of Samuel Messick, Grant Wiggins, and Robert

Calfee increased our understanding of the role of performance assessment in schools and classrooms. Richard Figueroa, Mary Catherine O'Connor, Sheila Valencia, Donna Deyhle, and John Oller have broadened our understanding of the importance of developing performance assessments that are contextually relevant to students' lives. Colleagues at the Evaluation Assistance Center-West in Albuquerque and district-level reformers in Chinle and Pine, Arizona, and throughout California have also added greatly to our understanding of the issues. We have been fortunate to have access to Far West Laboratory staff with assessment expertise, as well as to members of the Laboratory Network Program, a national group representing all the regional laboratories.

PART ONE
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section provides assessment developers and staff development specialists with a summary of important issues related to designing equitable assessments. It can in no way substitute for in-depth reading of literature on the subjects of language, culture, and assessment. A short list of readings that offers a more thorough grounding concludes Part One.

SECTION I:
EQUITY AND ACCESS IN CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

American children today do not have an equal chance to learn in school. Dramatic differences in resources available in rich and poor school districts persist and are growing. But the most profound inequities are often hidden from view; they persist even when children from different backgrounds attend the same schools. Even in such schools, expectations are not the same for all, and the opportunities for learning are not equivalent. Almost everywhere, schools expect less of children from poor and minority families; they therefore ask less of them and, above all, they offer them less.

Lauren Resnick (1992)

HIGH LEARNING STANDARDS FOR ALL

Current educational reforms in the United States have converged around one theme: It is not acceptable for just a small percentage of students to achieve at a high level; we must raise our expectations for learning for all students. Acting on these beliefs, educators at national, state, and local levels have developed standards — goal statements describing what students should know and be able to do — within and across subject areas. Indeed, a plethora of standards is available from national professional organizations; Project 2061 (science), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English, and the New Standards Project are but a few organizations that have developed and disseminated content standards. State departments of education have developed curriculum frameworks that detail content standards for learning as well. And, districts and schools have also set local standards for student learning and achievement.

Such standards-setting projects represent a concerted effort by educators to establish high-level expectations for our nation's schools and students — *all* students.

Educators typically begin the process of setting standards with a review of national and state standards and state and district frameworks, and then move to developing local standards, a process that encourages a review of local curricular and instructional practices for their alignment with national and state standards. As educators reach consensus about expectations for learning, they examine existing practices and recognize current strengths and weaknesses in programs and instructional strategies. Setting standards is the first step in developing an assessment system. Content standards are the foundation for the development of performance tasks and performance standards.

Setting standards at the local level has far-reaching implications for teaching, learning, and assessment. In this process, teachers learn explicitly from each other about what they value in student learning and achievement — both in terms of processes and outcomes. For example, when teachers in Chinle, Arizona, developed a life-skills standard that made connections between school ways of knowing and Navajo ways of knowing, district teachers unfamiliar with Navajo culture were able to participate in in-depth conversations about culture and its integration into the school curriculum.

Standards also mediate between curriculum frameworks and classroom expectations. Curriculum frameworks alone do not fully specify the content to be taught; and they only vaguely imply the performance expected of students. As teachers set standards, they can begin to align their expectations of students — something that can result in a fairer, more consistent approach as students move from class to class and teacher to teacher. It is usual to begin with content standards, i.e., what will be taught, and move them to performance standards through a process of examining student work. It is easier to be explicit about a good or exemplary performance in the context of actual performances. In some cases, teachers have been faced with judging

students' work on already-developed performance tasks and had to score them on ready-made rubrics (guides to evaluating performance). Even then, they have frequently found the process of coming to consensus on scoring those performances a powerful way to align their judgments of what constitutes good work (e.g., Arizona teachers' reports of their scoring training, *A Case Study of Assessment Reform in Pine Strawberry*, Estrin, 1994).

Standards shape teaching and learning events within classrooms; they guide the measurement of growth and achievement through performance on tasks. Therefore, it is critical that standards be based on deep knowledge of subject matter domains, on knowledge of how students learn, and on how language and culture interact with schooling to influence student performance as well as teacher judgment.

For a strong foundation for exemplary teaching, learning, and assessment the above criteria must be used to establish the standards. For this reason, standards should be developed by a diverse group of educators within a school, district or state who embodies a range of knowledge and who can pool their expertise to forge a consensus of what is important for students to know and be able to do and what constitutes high-quality performance. All teachers, including ESL and bilingual teachers, resource teachers, and other specialists must be involved in setting content and performance standards.

In addition, if the races, languages or cultures of students are not reflected in the demographics of the teaching staff, it is particularly important to include members of students' communities. To establish equity and access in assessment, time has to be devoted to allowing educators, colleagues, and parents to voice diverse viewpoints. Gaining consensus about standards that shape and reflect teaching, learning, and assessment is essential to establishing equity.

Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction

Standards-based education stresses understanding of concepts and the relationships among concepts, both within and across disciplines, from early childhood onward. Such an approach is based on research showing that even very young children engage in complex thought and operate at conceptual levels. For example, young children enjoy and gain meaning from literature long before they can read or write with proficiency. Nor is it necessary for them to learn all the vocabulary in a story before they can understand the story. They solve problems of sharing (partitioning) toys and food well in advance of acquiring formal procedures for doing so. Curriculum reflecting this learning paradigm is not sequential or hierarchical: students do not master basic skills before being asked to interpret, analyze or synthesize knowledge. Rather, they master skills in the context of meaningful activity and grapple with big concepts in ways appropriate to their own developmental level.

Opportunities to Learn

Will all students be given equal opportunities to engage in instructional activities that will enable them to reach certain standards? Will all students have access to a curriculum that promotes high-level thinking and conceptual application? Unless major changes are not made in how schooling is provided, the answer to these questions is likely to be "no." However, if the standards-setting process is used as the starting place for reform, a parallel focus on establishing instructional systems is necessary to ensure *access to learning*. Many educators have called for the development of opportunity to learn "standards" or school "delivery" standards. Such standards would hold schools accountable for ensuring access to learning. It is easy to understand the discrimination toward students who do not have access to the teaching and resources necessary to ensure the highest level of learning. Unfortunately, lack of understanding about linguistic and cultural issues often results in certain students being denied access to high-level curriculum. English language

learners and students from non-dominant cultures are all too often given a basic skills curriculum and instruction characterized as remedial. Thus, students without access to a high-quality and challenging curriculum and the most effective instructional practices cannot be fairly assessed by a system designed to measure high-level learning.

Aligning Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction

A guiding principle for ensuring both effectiveness and equity in education is that curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be well aligned. That is, the way content is taught is as important as the content; and assessment ought to reflect both the content taught and the instructional approaches used. If students are not asked to integrate ideas, reflect, and make judgments about curricular content during instruction, it is unreasonable to expect them to do so on an assessment. Similarly, a curriculum stressing thinking and application is not compatible with reductionist tests that ask for only simplistic answers. In a sense, curriculum is at the heart of assessment development: Designing, and implementing curricula and instructional practices that will result in learning we know students are capable of achieving precedes the development of meaningful assessment activities.

Teachers may find they need access to professional development experiences that demonstrate how to maximize opportunities for all students to think deeply and creatively in every curricular area. In addition, teachers need to promote among their students and the community an understanding of the criteria for judging achievement, i.e., what is expected of students. Parents may still regard teaching as "telling" and learning as "recall." They may erroneously fear that changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment will lead to a less rigorous education. Continuous two-way communication between schools and parents/community is crucial to the necessary understanding and support for major changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Assessment Conditions

Other issues of access and equity relate to the conditions under which performance tasks are administered and accomplished. It should go without saying that directions need to be clear, and ample time should be given for students to complete tasks. However, complex tasks that may have more than one interpretation may need teachers' additional assistance to ensure students' full understanding and task completion. For example, teachers may rephrase instructions, steer students to permitted resources (dictionary, calculator, etc.) or translate portions of a task. Conditions surrounding the assessment are an important part of the picture and should be noted, so educators and parents are informed of the particular circumstances under which a student performed a task. If a student is allowed to work from notes, have material translated or receive other forms of support (extended time, teacher coaching, peer collaboration, etc.) to complete an assessment, it should be mentioned in the description of the performance.

Using Multiple Indicators

An important principle of assessment equity states that a more valid picture of what a student has learned and can do is likely to emerge when multiple sources of information (assessments, information from parents, teacher reports, etc.) are used. This is particularly true for students whose first language is not English or whose experience base is not parallel to that of the dominant culture of the school. One assessment or one type of assessment should not be the sole measure of a student's achievement, because it is not likely to give an adequate picture of that student's learning. Nor should any *one* assessment be used to make decisions of any consequence about a student's educational future, particularly when that assessment uses language in which the student is not yet proficient. Messick, 1992, discussed "consequential validity," that is, the justification for the kinds of decisions and consequences that flow from tests and assessments. Consequential validity becomes a huge problem when students' abilities and potential have not been fairly judged because of the inappropriateness of the assessments. Thus,

multiple assessments across time should be provided and multiple measures used. It is also clear from recent research that for *any* student a single performance assessment cannot be assumed to be a valid index of that student's achievement in an entire domain, such as science. But beyond using more than one assessment, teachers should draw on other sources as well, such as parent interviews, their own observations, consultations with specialists (bilingual, ESL, etc.), and the students' own self-reports. In addition, students should have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss with their teachers their performance, as well as their progress. When students request another chance to demonstrate learning, it should be granted, if at all possible.

JUDGING PERFORMANCE

Decisions about how well a student does on a particular performance task are made in scoring sessions, where educators come together to score student work against an agreed-upon set of performance standards and detailed descriptions about levels of performance (outlined in a scoring guide often called a "rubric"). This scoring is valuable for a number of reasons. First, performance assessments do not have a single correct answer. The complexity and range of responses in student work is such that more reliable scoring occurs when at least two people score a task. Second, teachers hone and refine their own understanding of the content and performance standards through the professional discussions endemic in scoring sessions. Third, the understanding of the level of student learning gained by all participants can potentially inform the development of curriculum and instructional strategies used in future classrooms.

Training teachers and program staff to agree on the score of a particular student's performance involves three steps: selection of anchor or benchmark papers that illustrate score points; scoring of training papers that represent a range of performances; and repeated discussion about performance standards that guide scoring until an acceptable level of agreement about scores is achieved.

Usually scoring is considered reliable if scores on a single piece of work scored by different teachers differ by no more than one score point. (Rubrics typically have from four to six score points.) The deep level of knowledge gained from scoring work against performance standards contributes to alignment of teaching practices, to increased understanding of those subjects and areas being assessed, and potentially to helping students grow as learners (because of teachers' enhanced understanding of student learning).

It is critical that a diverse group of educators judge students' performances. Just as a broad representation of school and community contexts contributes to the equity of content and performance standards, so broad representation contributes to equity in judging student work. A diverse group of educators needs to be involved in establishing benchmarks for performance and in selecting actual student work to serve as anchor papers representing various levels of performance. Wherever possible, teachers and paraprofessionals from students' own linguistic and cultural communities should be involved in the scoring and interpretation of student work.

In summary, educators involved in developing performance-based assessments need to consider the curriculum and instruction that students have access to as they design content and performance standards.

SECTION II: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DEMANDS OF ASSESSMENTS

Though performance assessments may call upon students to use "multiple intelligences" or show their learning through different products or activities (drawing, dramatizing, constructing 3-D models), these assessments are still heavily reliant on language. Language is used in oral and written instructions that are at times lengthy and complex. Assessments often require reading of extended passages: In language arts or social studies assessments, students are routinely asked to write essays that reflect critical thinking, proficiency with particular expository writing conventions, and development of new ideas.

LANGUAGE DEMANDS OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS	
SAMPLE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES	**LANGUAGE DEMANDS**
Write a report to a friend who was sick today, explaining to her the science experiment you did and how you did it. (Elementary writing task following a classroom science experiment.)	Recount a multi-step past event, sequencing and reinterpreting information; assume role of the teacher to a non-present audience. Requires considering what recipient already knows, level of detail he or she needs to comprehend.
Tell us anything else about your understanding of this story —what it means to you, what it makes you think about in your own life, or anything that relates to your reading of it. (Segment of an elementary reading assessment.)	Give account of own experience(s), linking to text, elaborating story comprehension.
Imagine that you are a staff writer for a small magazine. One day you are given your "big chance:" You are asked to write a final scene of an incomplete story. (Taken from a high school writing task.)	Complete an account (a story) following prescribed format; comprehend/analyze the story so that the new segment makes sense. Take on the voice of another author, maintaining style.
Tasks are adapted from examples provided by the California Department of Education.	

Figure 1. Adapted from Language Demands of Performance Assessments, Estrin, E.T. (1993). "Alternative Assessment: Issues in Language, Culture and Equity." *Far West Laboratory Knowledge Brief #2.*

Take the first example in Figure 1. In this assessment task, the student has to step back from an activity he/she engaged in, reflect on that activity, and recapture it in written language, enough to communicate it to someone who may have no clue about what occurred. This kind of writing

requires careful consideration of exactly what information a person who was not present would need to understand the events, including what shared knowledge exists based on past shared experience, and the level of detail needed to envision procedures in the science experiment. The task demands more than one that simply asks the student to let the teacher know what he/she understands. Highly metacognitive sensitivity is needed, along with a very sophisticated application of language. Mathematics assessments now commonly demand that students write about how and why they solved a problem as they did — something that calls for both cognitive insights (metacognition) and the ability to express these insights clearly in language.

Indeed, the level of language that students are expected to process and produce in the course of completing performance assessments is nearly always more complex than the language of traditional standardized tests. Students who are still learning English and those who have not grown up in households where language forms and uses parallel those of the classroom are likely to be at an even greater disadvantage with performance assessments than they were with multiple-choice and short answer tests.

Despite our concerns about the language demands of these assessments, we believe the assessments offer significant opportunities for students to display their learning in meaningful ways. In the long run, students will benefit from the development of what have been called "higher order literacy" skills, i.e., the ability to use language flexibly, in a great range of forms for a range of purposes. But we must recognize the need to provide students with the support to develop these skills not routinely demanded by past traditional assessments (or instruction, for many students). Students need many, many opportunities to develop these abilities during instructional activities — long before they are asked to display them on assessments. What we can do to maximize the benefits of these new assessments is to analyze their language demands and provide instruction and mediation to create equal opportunities for all students.

Cultural Variation in Language Use

Culture and language are deeply intertwined. The language of a group reflects its "world view," in both the forms and uses of the group's language. Vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structures (such as how narratives are constructed or conversations carried out) vary widely and reflect the needs of that particular group and how it understands and construes the world.

Using language to learn or show what one has learned varies greatly by culture. For many American Indian groups, cultural learning often takes place through demonstration and quiet, self-guided practice, rather than through explicit instruction via language. Moreover, children themselves determine when they are ready to show what they have learned. Adults do not demand performance at arbitrary intervals. Among these groups, it is inappropriate to respond quickly to a question without due deliberation. And, the choice of a single answer over all others is considered invalid. From this point of view, all answers are likely to have some elements of truth and, therefore, deserve consideration.

Similar issues may apply to students from other communities. Children from other "non-mainstream" groups may find it out of keeping with the norms of their own cultural communities to take on the voice of an expert (which assessments often ask students to do) or to respond to questions for which they suspect teacher already knows the answers. Varying the ways in which questions are posed allows students to display their learning in ways parallel to their life out of school. For example, teachers will not want to be restricted to the usual "initiation-response-evaluation" format in which the teacher asks a question (initiation), the student answers (response), and then the teacher comments on what the student has said (evaluation). In an alternate approach, "evaluation" by an adult is omitted, or the evaluation comes in the form of responses by peers — so that the discussion is regulated more by students than by the teacher.

Another successful approach is to pose a question not to an individual student but to the group. In addition, contrary to "mainstream expectations," allowing overlapping student responses may not only be understandable but may promote desired participation. Consideration also needs to be given to the *kinds* of questions. For example, it is common for teachers to ask questions to which they already know the answers. In some communities that is rarely, if ever, done, so children from those communities may not be initially responsive to such questions — leading the teacher to believe they do not know the answers.

Beyond questioning strategies, other classroom practices can serve to be more inclusive than exclusive, when cultural variations of ways in which students participate in learning are accommodated. The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) in Hawaii has long been a source of insight about how social structures in children's home communities can promote greater participation and learning when adapted to classroom needs. In collaboration with a team of anthropologists, KEEP teachers have used Hawaiian storytelling conventions, along with traditional Hawaiian communication patterns. Another example of cultural accommodation comes from the work of Navajo educators and university collaborators in Arizona, where the cooperative learning paradigm has been adapted to include very small, same-sex groups rather than the 4-6 student, mixed-sex groups commonly employed. Such adaptations can extend to how assessments are designed and administered.

Many written language structures and conventions that schools consider to be standard, — always using a topic sentence or writing stories with a beginning, middle, and end — are simply conventions that schools have adopted. There are other, equally valid discourse structures that children have learned in their home communities. For example, offering a series of details or facts and then providing a summary statement or conclusion (episodic narrative structure) is as logical as the more deductive style prevalent in American schools. Yet, when students use such an alternative in school, it may wrongly identified as a deficient production of the expected structure.

Thus, particularly with students still learning the linguistic and cultural norms of mainstream American schooling, teachers may find that students do not respond or participate in assessment (or instructional) activities in expected ways or in ways that reveal what they have actually learned. However, with some awareness of how differences in language and culture influence students' classroom performance, teachers can provide supports that tap students' own ways of knowing and doing, and introduce them to other classroom conventions. Simple strategies, such as allowing students choices about the timing and pacing of assessment, or latitude in topic or representation of knowledge (oral, written, video, other) can go a long way toward making assessments more valid.

The point is not that teachers with students from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds have to provide a different program of instruction and assessment for each student. Rather, with awareness of how these kinds of linguistic and cultural differences may play out in the classroom, teachers can provide multiple ways for students to participate and succeed. Thinking in these terms, we can readily see why reliance on only one assessment or form of assessment could lead to a very limited, and invalid, understanding of a student's learning.

SECTION III: CONNECTING ASSESSMENT TO LOCAL CONTEXT

In addition to modifying the conditions under which students are assessed, educators are adapting existing tasks and designing new tasks to make assessment more meaningful and authentic for students. "Authentic assessment" was first used by educators who felt that assessment should become related to the actual performances desired in different subject areas or disciplines. These new forms of assessment focusing on student performance are often worthwhile learning experiences in themselves: Students gain a deeper understanding of the essential knowledge and skills of a domain as they apply them in the context.

CRITERIA FOR "AUTHENTIC" ASSESSMENTS

Performance assessments should meet the following design criteria, whether their scope is national, state or local:

- Assessments should take into account students' backgrounds and allow for a variety of student responses.
- Assessments should be engaging, motivating, and thought-provoking (i.e., meaningful learning experiences in themselves).
- Assessments should be multidimensional in ways that accommodate different culturally-based cognitive styles and modes of representation.
- Assessments should consider students' experiences with the appropriate corresponding concepts, knowledge, skills, and applications.
- Assessment processes and formats should parallel effective instructional processes and formats with which students have had experience and success.

Regarding this last criterion, however, there is no assumption that high-quality teaching must come before the development of performance assessments. In fact, at all levels (national, state, and local), the development of assessment measures has been used to drive curricular and instructional reform efforts. The results depend upon the degree to which teachers have the training and institutional support to provide all students with the desired instruction. In many instances, teachers have been presented with new assessment systems without the professional development support they need to alter their instructional approach. Conversely, teachers have also been presented with new assessment systems that lag behind the kind of instructional approaches they use.

When assessment is disconnected from teaching and learning, students must respond to assessment demands that are devoid of a meaningful context or a familiar schema. That is, the ability of some students to respond is compromised, because the cues that they typically depend on in school are missing. Their chances for using their knowledge of the world and their own repertoire of strategies to accurately represent what they know are reduced; and because students cannot respond meaningfully, assessment outcomes are less useful to teachers for evaluating student learning and for planning instruction.

Linking the Worlds of Home and School

Whenever possible, educators should be encouraged in their efforts to build assessments that allow students to create and make meaning of academic concepts from their personal experiences. Students bring the cultural experiences from their lives with their families and communities to school with them. When they are immersed in school experience and must learn to "read" the culture of the school, there are often serious discontinuities between these two contexts. If the student's experiences in a cultural group or as a speaker of a language other than Standard English are not taken into account when assessment tasks are developed and scored, the evaluation

process of how well a student has learned within the school's culture will be flawed. A failing performance may indicate the degree of disconnection between the task and the student's frame of reference, rather than the degree of mastery of the knowledge and skills being assessed. Commonly cited cases relate to the differences between urban and rural students' experiences. For example, urban students may not have much, if any, knowledge to bring to bear on reading passages concerning farm animals or harvesting. Rural students may never have been to a department store and ridden on an escalator or in an elevator. Immigrant children may also confront an alien landscape when asked to talk about birthday parties, shopping trips, visits to the zoo or Halloween customs.

For assessment tasks to be engaging and motivating, they must be meaningful to students. Successful assessment tasks allow students flexibility in the ways they work, whether by choices among multiple modalities or open-endedness of the response required. In these ways, students can bring their own worlds (in the form of ways of knowing, learning, and doing) into the classroom — moving beyond the mere recall or regurgitation of information toward construction of complex responses and products that bridge home and community with school.

One way to link to students' community contexts is to *begin* the teaching, learning, and assessment cycle by drawing from students' "lived experience." This approach is the opposite of the usual practice of introducing school concepts first and making connections to students' lives in extension projects or only at the point of assessment. Mathematics instruction, for example, has usually followed the pattern of introducing procedural and axiomatic knowledge first, then asking students to apply it in their own lives or in some problem with real-world implications. Some research suggests that the reverse would be more effective. Children use intuitive mathematics in their everyday lives to solve problems about counting, sharing, locating, and budgeting money or to play games requiring spatial or logical skills. To make connections to their lived experience — both for motivating participation and for cognitive advantage — teachers can elicit examples, in part, of how students use math (or any other knowledge) in everyday life and build their instruction and assessment around students' experiences.

Performance assessments rooted in students' experiences and understanding can use community contexts drawn from their everyday lives for investigations and problem-solving activities. Current events can inform the development of domain-specific or integrated tasks. Such connections between school and community encourage students to demonstrate their achievement growth over time, while engaging in assessment activities with the added value of being real life.

The criteria for authenticity of assessment can, first, guide the development of performance assessments that connect with students' lives second, allow students to display learning in culturally responsive ways and, third, make fundamental connections between school and the world outside of school. Such performance assessments cannot be ready-made, since schools and communities are fluid and diverse. This is also the case even when students' home and community languages, and ways of knowing and doing, closely parallel their schools.

CONCLUSION

The discussion about the role of language and culture in performance assessment included in this part of the *Guide* is intended as an introduction to important issues that must be addressed if assessments are to be equitable. Each attempt made on the part of educators working at national, state, and local levels contributes to the knowledge-base of the field. The next part of the *Guide* provides descriptions of strategies used by Far West Laboratory staff collaborating with districts to develop performance assessments tailored to local contexts.

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PART TWO
STRATEGIES AND TASKS

Part Two of the *Guide* provides educators with strategies for developing performance assessments that connect to local context. It examines the degree to which the various strategies promote equitable and authentic instruction. Wherever possible, descriptions of tasks that reflect these strategies will be given. (These tasks, used as examples of the strategies, can be used for the workshop activities outlined in Part Three.)

SECTION I: STRATEGIES FOR TASK DEVELOPMENT

Educators have used a variety of strategies to develop assessments that interconnect with students' lives. Strategies range from revising or editing existing assessments to become more meaningful to students, to creating assessments that fully integrate school and community ways of learning into the content and performance standards, as well as, the task design itself. In this section, several strategies, used to develop performance assessments for ethnolinguistically and culturally diverse students, are examined for their abilities to meaningfully integrate linguistic and cultural histories of students.

STRATEGY 1

Translate an existing assessment into students' home languages.

STRATEGY 2

Change the names or background information in an existing assessment to match the linguistic or cultural background of students.

STRATEGY 3

Develop tasks that ask students to express or evaluate positions and ideas based on their own perspectives and experiences.

STRATEGY 4

Develop tasks that promote connections between school knowledge and local context, including language and culture.

STRATEGY 5

Develop tasks that integrate students' cognitive styles and strategies with school expectations for learning.

STRATEGY 6

Develop tasks that assess multiple ways of knowing and tap more than one form of representation (oral, written, displayed).

Strategies 1 and 2 have often been used at national and state levels. Because language intersects with culture, each has problems. Converting the names or pictures to reflect the local context may result in an assessment with a superficial familiarity. Word-for-word translation does not work either. In particular, figurative language cannot be directly translated. Even if translations are attempted at a meaning level, problems may result, because the text of an assessment does not smoothly translate into another cultural context. Translating from one language to another really means translating from one culture to another.

Background or contextual information germane to the assessment may not be translatable or transferable, because the same concepts may not be "common to both." For example, the assumption of free time or freedom from the responsibilities to family and community are not necessarily universal. Thus, assessment tasks which include "expendable time" or "individual choice" as a condition for problem-solving activities may lack veracity in some communities. Background information in one language or setting may be foreground in another, resulting in skewed tasks. Such translation flaws may affect the assessment's validity, that is, the inaccurately translated assessment may be measuring something very different from the original assessment. For these reasons, unless adaptations are managed by biliterate and bicultural assessment developers, problems will persist. It may be better to develop new assessments in the target language or context.

Strategy 3 is the most commonly used strategy for designing assessments adaptable to local context at national, state, and local assessment levels. Asking students to evaluate positions or ideas presented in the text of an assessment allows students to express viewpoints in a manner valued by educators at all grade levels, from elementary to graduate school. Reading comprehension tasks within and across disciplines which utilize this strategy may ask students to read a given text and then critique or evaluate it. Students must comprehend the text, analyze its meaning and express viewpoints about validity based on understanding and personal judgment. Writing tasks often describe a scenario (detailed in a prompt) to which students must respond, addressing the ideas in a manner appropriate to the task or genre demands. One feature of these tasks calls for students to imbue their writing with a personal connection and viewpoint. The success of such a strategy for students from various backgrounds may depend on assessment texts or prompts. If the ideas embedded in the material are contextually familiar, a student is more likely responding to the cognitive demands of the task than if the student has to decode both context and text.

Strategy 4 involves developing tasks that promote connections between school knowledge and local context. This strategy can be applied in varying ways, depending upon the degree of specificity of the task prompt. The prompt, i.e., what the task asks the student to accomplish, can be generic or open-ended: The prompt describes what the student is to accomplish without proscribing the scenario (text or specific investigation). Decisions about the degree of standardization of task administration, such as how much teacher-student interaction is permissible, are made at the state, district or school level (depending on the purpose of the assessment). Such aspects of a generic or open-ended prompt need to be confirmed to ensure the validity and reliability of the task. The following two task prompts are examples of generic or open-ended prompts:

> "You will read a story or selection. Then, you will show your understanding of the content and the author's intent through the following activities."

> "You will form a single prediction about household data and then conduct a survey to determine your findings. You will prepare written and oral presentations of your conclusions that must include the following information."
>
> (*Complete text of both tasks are included later in this part of the* Guide.)

This type of task is curriculum-linked so educators at the site level can make preliminary decisions about how to "fill" the task. They can make decisions about reading selections and the appropriate scope of data-collection efforts. (If students live in close-knit or contiguous communities, a survey of family and neighbors may be appropriate; if students' homes are separated by great distances, a survey of staff or students may be more appropriate.)

Strategy 4 can develop tasks that make connections to local context through the inclusion of specific information or activities in the tasks themselves. A task may include a familiar context or concept as the focus, or it may require that students construct a response utilizing their own experiences and lives. The following task offers a specific context:

> "In this task you will evaluate how effective the rules in our school are in promoting an environment of good citizenship and reasonable rights and responsibilities. You will write a one-page 'editorial' about how the rules in our school have helped or hurt you. You will also describe how rules can be improved."

Alternately, the prompt may specify how the academic skills and concepts being assessed allow students to respond with personal material from their lives. The following prompt exemplifies a task assessing personal narrative writing:

> "In this task you will write a narrative story as fiction or nonfiction about a person you see as a hero. You will examine the values, strengths, achievements, and

> struggles of this person, as we did when we examined the personality traits and life of the main character in the novel Island of the Blue Dolphins."

Strategies 5 and 6 are most often used by districts and schools, because they are dependent on actual knowledge and understanding of local settings. These strategies are difficult for assessment developers to use unless there is stability in the demographics of student population — in the number and type of languages spoken and cultures represented — and unless the assessment developers have extensive knowledge of both school and community contexts.

Strategy 5 is used to develop assessments that integrate students' cultural and linguistic ways of knowing within the content of the task. This means that school knowledge and cultural and linguistic knowledge from the students' lives inform the task and the students' response. The following prompt is an example of this type of strategy:

> "In this task you will research your clan and create you own clan map. You will write a narrative about your family. Include information about your maternal grandmother and grandfather, as well as the importance of other family members. You will also write a poem about your heritage which may be in the language of your choice or bilingual."

This task was written by a Navajo teacher for Navajo students. Several aspects of the task are bicultural. Navajo life is organized by the mother's clan, and it is traditional to introduce yourself by stating your mother's clan, then your father's. Marriage within your own clan is forbidden. The reference to the maternal grandmother and grandfather is a direct inclusion of Navajo ways of learning: Grandparents are an important source of teaching about the Navajo way; they often live traditionally and have gained valuable knowledge; as "elders," they are respected by all Navajos, and greatly valued by their grandchildren. The task allows for the inclusion of Navajo in the narrative through the use of Navajo language for clan names, for specific activities, and in writing poetry.

Strategy 6 is used to develop tasks that provide evidence of multiple linguistic and cultural ways of knowing. The task described above also utilizes strategy 6 in its assessment of student performance using two rubrics. One rubric reflects dominant ways of communicating and demonstrating mastery of writing. The other reflects Navajo ways of using story telling, of negotiating the needs of individuals and communities, and of being a leader in the Navajo tradition. The students' work is thus judged for its mastery of both school and Navajo ways of knowing and displaying knowledge.

SECTION II: EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE TASKS

This part of the *Guide* provides educators with examples of performance tasks developed for diverse student populations. Each task has been field-tested and is now in its second year of use.

The tasks were written by educators involved in the development and implementation of district-level portfolio assessment systems. Far West Laboratory staff worked closely with classroom teachers to develop tasks that assessed already-identified standards and were meaningful and engaging for students. Tasks in this part of the *Guide* are part of systems that include standards, tasks, rubrics, conferencing, and reporting components. The tasks were developed using several steps. The first step was that of stating clearly which standards were being assessed by the task. (Each standard has both cognitive and behavioral components.) Task requirements are designed to provide evidence of mastery of concepts and skills tied to the standards. As teachers design and field-test tasks, they constantly evaluate whether the task does indeed measure its intended material, i.e., whether it has "construct validity."

THE STORY OF ONE TASK

Teachers and administrators in the Chinle Unified School District, an Arizona Public School located on the Navajo Reservation, have worked with Far West Laboratory staff to develop culturally responsive assessments that make meaningful connections between Navajo culture and state and district expectations for learning. In this subsection of the *Guide*, the

story of one task, the Heritage Task, is described to illustrate how the use of strategies 5 and 6 contribute to the development of assessments that meet criteria outlined under the "Criteria for Culturally Fair Assessments," (page 19).

In 1993, Chinle Unified School District turned to Far West Laboratory for help in developing performance-based assessments for fifth and sixth grades that reflected the local context and met the state's reporting requirements. The previous year the district had experimented with portfolio use at the fifth grade level and had been dissatisfied: Work folders that contained miscellaneous worksheets and projects and a burdensome checklist of skills did not provide meaningful assessment information.

During the first year of development, all fifth grade teachers in the district worked with Far West Laboratory staff to develop a portfolio assessment system that reflected the district's commitment to the integration of Navajo language and culture across the curriculum. The following four standards were developed by Navajo and non-Navajo teachers:

Environmental and Cultural Awareness and Responsibility:
Students will develop an awareness of their local and global environments through exploration of the cultures and ecosystems within them. They will be able to identify systems of organization and cause, and effect relationships which exist in the world now and historically, to effect change.

Mathematical Understanding and Power:
Students will be able to communicate mathematical concepts as they demonstrate their understanding through modeling, identifying, and extending concepts.

Life Skills: Shá Bik'eh Hózhóón:
Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

Communication:
Students will communicate their academic, social, and affective knowledge and understanding to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

These standards reflect the philosophy of the district: A district goal is the inclusion of the language and culture of the Navajo in the school system. Respect for the environment and an understanding of the interrelationships among local and global environments and the people are important aspects of Navajo culture. Communication includes the development of fluency in Navajo and the use of aural, graphic, and symbolic communication modes, as well as school-based English literacy development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

After developing the standards, the teachers designed performance tasks. They first identified the standard(s) to be assessed through a task, and then began brainstorming for classroom learning activities that would demonstrate the skills and concepts germane to the standard and which would engage students in meaningful learning. Here they began factoring in the state expectations for learning, aligning these reporting requirements with indices of classroom learning. The Heritage Task, written by a Navajo teacher, represents the intersection of Navajo cultural knowledge with the state's requirement of mastery of narrative writing.

The Heritage Task provides evidence for the attainment of the Communication and Life Skills standards. Students are asked to use multiple sources of information, including interviews, and to communicate about their family through writing and graphics. In and of itself, the Heritage Task is an example of Strategy 5 because of its emphasis on fundamental aspects of Navajo culture, the role of the clan and family (particularly elders) in transmitting cultural knowledge, and in developing a child's understanding of *Hózhóón,* which can be glossed as "walking in beauty" or maintaining a harmonious balance in all aspects of life.

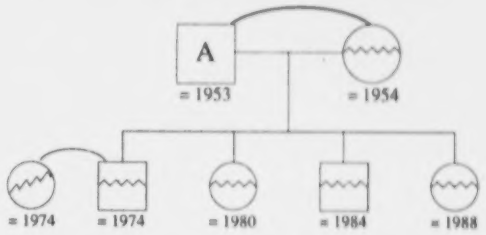
Teachers in Chinle wanted more than developing tasks that made meaningful connections to Navajo life: They wanted to assess in ways that reflect Navajo ways of knowing. For this reason, they developed rubrics that capture the concepts and skills key to their standards. These rubrics are used to assess students' growth over time using several pieces of evidence. But when teachers report to the state, they must use state-developed generic rubrics. The Life Skills rubric differs from the state's rubric; it allows for multiple ways of knowing and validates more than one representation (illustrating Strategy 6).

The Life Skills rubric describes the students' understanding of *Hózhóón*, with its beginning in awareness of the self and cultural narratives, and its progression to the interrelatedness of knowledge of the past with the future, as well as the person with the community. The Heritage Task provides evidence of attainment of the standard requirements. In contrast, the state's generic rubric describes ways of writing appropriate to the genre. The state criteria for narrative emphasizes a distinct beginning, middle, and end, significance of topic, and use of details.

The Heritage Task is an example of this district's commitment to culturally responsive assessment. The task is meaningful within the students' culture and allows them to use school learning to develop cultural knowledge. Chinle teachers have developed many such tasks. Additional examples are included in the sample tasks in this section.

Heritage Task

Sample Format for Family Map



Instructions	Legend
Father on left, mother on right. Order of children: oldest to youngest (left to right). Use a □ for male and a ○ for female. Use a ⌒ to indicate marriage. Use a = for year born.	□ Male ○ Female ⌒ Marriage tie A Anglo born to Bitter Water Clan born to Near the Mountain Clan

Sample Poem

Pond by My Grandmother's House

By Terry Tsaipi

Mrs. Barlow's class, Chinle Junior High School

I'm walking by my grandmother's pond.
Above me, I see the sun rays stretching over the clouds.
Around me, the water sparkles like diamonds.
Below me, Her Mother Earth holding crystal clear water.
I smell the wet ground and taste the crispness of the air.
I hear the wind whistling through the trees.

I hear myself breathing against the wind.
I throw little rocks at the water, and
I hear the splashes of the water.

I can taste the dry wind going down my throat.
I can still smell the wet dirt from the wet rain.

I remember the time when I was walking with my grandmother to the sheep.

I'm walking by my grandmother's pond.
Above me, the afternoon sun heats the afternoon sky.
Around me, grandmother's childhood memories.
Below me, I study my grandmother's footsteps.
I feel peaceful, brave and young.

Heritage Task

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Heritage Task (continued)

Standards: Students will communicate their academic, social, and effective knowledge and understanding to a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

Performance Task Domain: Investigating the World

Task Overview: For this task, the student will research his/her family lineage and create a family map, a poem, and an autobiography.

Time: 2-3 weeks.

Prompt to Students: In this task you will research your clan and create your own clan map. You will write a narrative about your family. Include information about your maternal grandmother and grandfather, as well as including information about the importance of other family members. You will also write a poem about your heritage. Your poem may be in the language of your choice or bilingual.

Re-explanation for Students: To accomplish this task you will need to:

1. Interview relatives about your family.
2. Investigate other documents or sources for information about your family (such as, family records, Navajo tribe members, family trees, role numbers, baby books, land use permits).
3. Create your immediate family's map.
4. Design a symbol for your paternal and maternal lineages or nationalities.
5. Extend your research to include larger family.
6. Create extended family map.
7. Create a legend below your map to explain symbols.
8. Write an autobiography of your family. Include information about maternal grandmother and grandfather and the importance of family.
9. Write an original poem about your heritage. Your poem may be in the language of your choice or bilingual.

Heritage Task

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Rubrics for Heritage Task

Life Skills: Shá Bik'eh Hózhóón

Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

I	II	III	IV	V
Student is able to state an opinion. Student is able to identify components of a community. Student is able to list facts but does not make strong connections. Student is able to illustrate meaning by creating a story. Student is able to identify personal goals with guidance.	Student is able to express personal opinions. Student is able to identify the role of services available within the community. Student is able to relate a process of sequencing. Student has conceptual knowledge of cultural narratives and their cultural meanings. Student is able to identify personal goals and is aware of personal needs.	Student is able to identify and relate with others of the same opinion. Student is able to communicate understanding of his/her role in a family to the community. Student can demonstrate role of cultural narratives and their cultural meanings. Student shows a sense of leadership.	Student is able to present and defend personal beliefs and values. Student is able to portray personal and community relationships through communication. Student is able to use past events to reflect on current issues. Student is able to integrate cultural meanings with works of imagination through projects. Student is able to forecast knowledge of personal goals.	Student is able to reflect on past experience and apply knowledge to the future. Student is able to relate personal perspective and the perspective of others in the community. Student is able to analyze a social and economic organization in a community. Student is able to demonstrate a complete understanding of cultural narratives and cultural meanings in past and future. Student is able to express personal vision goal beyond self and community. Student is able to show independence and self-direction.

Generic Writing Rubric (Observation 1 Content: K-12)

A 1 Paper	A 2 Paper	A 3 Paper	A 4 Paper	Other/*
The paper will indicate that the prompt is barely addressed. Awareness of audience may be missing. The paper will demonstrate a lack of understanding of the appropriate style. The general idea may be conveyed, but details, facts, examples or descriptions will be lacking. The beginning, middle or ending will be missing*	The paper does not fully address the prompt, which causes it to be rambling and/or disjointed. There may be little awareness of audience. The paper will demonstrate an incomplete or inadequate understanding of the appropriate style. Details, facts, examples or descriptions may be incomplete. The beginning, middle or ending may be missing.*	The paper will address the prompt and will be written in appropriate style. It will likely be well organized and clearly written, but may contain vague or inarticulate language. It will show a sense of audience, but may be missing some details and/or examples, offer incomplete descriptions, and fewer insights into characters and/or topics. The student may offer a weak or inappropriate beginning, middle or ending.*	The paper will fully address the prompt and be written in a style appropriate to the genre being assessed. It will clearly show an appropriate awareness of audience. The paper will "come alive" by incorporating mood, style, and creative expression. It will be well organized, contain sufficient details, examples, descriptions, and insights to engage the reader. The paper will display a strong beginning, fully developed middle, and end with appropriate closure.*	Assign a 0 if the student failed to attempt the paper, presented writing which is off topic or answered in an offensive or inappropriate manner. Assign an N/S (Not Scorable) if the response is illegible or unreadable. * Poetry does not always have a beginning, middle or ending. All other sections of the rubric apply to poetry.

TASK SHELLS

Each shell describes the cognitive and structural requirements of tasks within a domain of performance. Far West Laboratory developed four assessment "task shells" to help teachers develop tasks that had common features and demands. These shells serve as organizers for types of tasks. The four shells grew out of an analysis of ways that students are often asked to organize and display knowledge in classrooms.

COLLECTING AND REPRESENTING REAL DATA

The domain represents statistics and scientific methodologies that we teach students and ask them to demonstrate in applied activities.

EXAMINING, REPRESENTING & EVALUATING INFORMATION

The domain represents the emphasis we place on the acquisition and interpretation of knowledge.

INVESTIGATING THE WORLD

The domain represents the ways we ask students to make connections between academic knowledge and the world outside school.

CREATING NEW MODELS AND SYMBOLS

The domain represents original work that we ask of students, when they go beyond the content of instruction to create something original.

Shells are used for several reasons: One, they help teachers categorize what students will be required to do in various assessment activities. Two, they serve as task templates. Three, they help standardize task development. Four, they help standardize the administration of tasks. Figure 2 better describes the shells with examples of tasks for each domain.

Overview	Task Shell 1	Task Shell 2	Task Shell 3	Task Shell 4
Task Shells Describe Domains of Performance across the Curriculum	**Collecting and Representing Real Data**	**Investigating the World**	**Examining, Representing and Evaluating Information**	**Creating New Models and Symbols**
Content Requirements of Skills	• Make predictions, generate or collect data to verify • Describe methods and organize data • Interpret data • Evaluate results	• Make connections between academic learning and world • Apply communication techniques or academic concepts to represent current situations • Evaluate application of academic tools and techniques	• Demonstrate knowledge of a subject • Describe significant aspects of a subject • Provide concrete representation of understanding • Evaluate learning	• Generate original models and symbolic forms • Create symbolically using aural, written, visual or other modes • Evaluate based on tools and goals • Set further goals
Subject Matter	Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies	Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Health, and Science	Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics	Art, Writing, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science
Structural Requirements	• Tasks are introduced and discussed in class but completed independently on a group or individual basis • Tasks include time for revision • Final products may include support materials • Tasks include individual evaluation of final project			
Examples of Specific Tasks (Included in Guide)	• Household Survey Task	• Hero Task • Heritage Task	• Generic Social Studies Task • Generic Reading Task • Rug Task	• Mural Task

FIGURE 2

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Teachers used these shells to develop the tasks included in the *Guide*. They also used a common task format so teachers from different settings had a common language and experience around task development. Other formats are equally suitable.

Seven tasks follow this introduction. They represent standards, strategies, domains of performance, and subject areas. They are mapped to standards, and performance on each is judged using a rubric. The following chart provides an overview to the tasks. (A duplicate of the chart is included in Part III of the *Guide*.)

Tasks	Grade Range	Summary	Performance Task Domain	Assessment Strategy	Additional Information
Generic Reading	4-6	Students read, interpret, and evaluate a literary or non-fiction text.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Generic Social Studies	4-6	Students summarize important features of one historical period through writing and graphics.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Heritage	4-8	Students research their clan and write a narrative and poem about their heritage.	Investigating the World	Strategies 5 & 6 Integrate students' ways of knowing with school expectations for learning.	Strategy 6 applies because task was developed to assess school and Navajo ways of communicating used for district and state reporting.
Hero	5-8	Students write a narrative piece about a hero in their own lives.	Investigating the World	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used for district and state reporting.
Household Data Survey	5-8	Students make a numerical prediction and collect, represent and analyze data, confirming or refuting prediction.	Collecting and Representing Real Data	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Mural	6-8	Students design a mural representing Navajo culture and calculate costs and time of completion.	Investigating the World	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Developed specifically for a new school. Used for district and state reporting.
Rug	4-5	Students design a rug and calculate time of completion based on complexity of design.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information.	Strategy 5 Integrate students' ways of knowing with school expectations for learning.	The story-like structure of task parallels Navajo discourse style, as does the actual context (earning money for clothes).

FIGURE 3

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GENERIC READING TASK

STANDARDS: Students will communicate their academic, social, and affective knowledge and understanding to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

TASK GRADE RANGE: 4-6

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information

TASK OVERVIEW: Students will read, interpret, and evaluate a literary or nonfiction text. Students will display their understanding of the text by answering questions, reflecting on their own reading, and evaluating their learning. Students will have 3-4 days to complete the task with daily class time provided for discussion and revision. Teachers will discuss the prompt with the entire class, prior to individual student work.

TIME: 3-4 days

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: You will read a story or selection. After you read the selection, you will show your understanding of the content and the author's intent through the following activities:

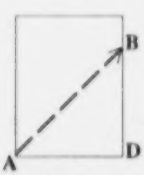
1. A short **summary** of significant aspects of the story or selection including its main ideas and important events.

2. A **story diorama** (a three-dimensional stage upon which figures can be placed or drawn) about the event in the story that you found most important to you. A **quote** from the event or section that you found important and reasons why you chose this quote.

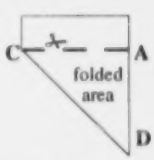
3. A **graphic or description** of the strategies you used to figure out the meanings of words or ideas in the story, including an example.

4. A **conclusion** about the story that tells about what it means to you, what it makes you think of, or anything that relates to your reading of it.

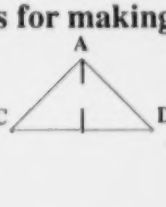
Instructions for making a diorama using 8½" by 11" paper



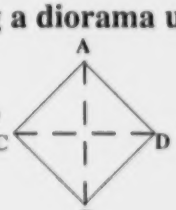
Fold point A to point B.



Cut along top edge of folded area (C to A).



Fold triangle in half (from C to D) to form smaller triangle.



Open triangles into diamond.

Cut along crease from corner (B) to center of diamond (E).

Make a pocket by folding side F over side G. Secure diorama with a paper clip.

GENERIC SOCIAL STUDIES TASK

STANDARDS: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the many cultural groups affecting America's past, present, and future.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 4-6

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information

TASK OVERVIEW: Students will examine one historical period and the lives of two groups living in that time. Students will summarize important features of the time and groups in writing and through graphic analysis. Students will have 3-5 days to complete the task with daily analysis. Teachers will discuss the prompt with entire class prior to individual student work.

TIME: 3-5 days

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: You will examine a historical period and represent your knowledge of cultural groups living within that period. You will prepare a written presentation that must include the following information:

1. A **summary** of significant aspects of the historical period and the groups you have learned about.

2. A **timeline, chart or graph** showing important dates and events related to that time period.

3. Your **conclusion** about the peoples and time period.

4. A **list** of the benefits of learning about the past.

HERITAGE TASK

STANDARDS: Students will communicate their academic, social, and affective knowledge and understanding to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 4-8

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Investigating the World

TASK OVERVIEW: For this task, the student will research his/her family lineage and create a family map, a poem, and an autobiography.

TIME: 2-3 weeks

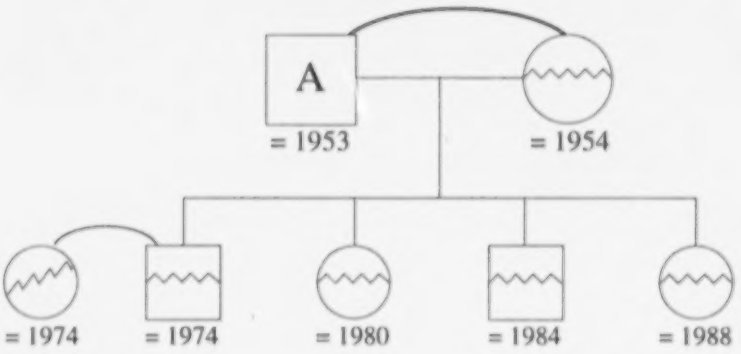
PROMPT TO STUDENTS: In this task you will research your clan and create your own clan map. You will write a narrative about your family. Include information about your maternal grandmother and grandfather, as well as information about the importance of other family members. You will also write a poem about your heritage. Your poem may be in the language of your choice or bilingual.

RE-EXPLANATION FOR STUDENTS: To accomplish this task you will need to:

1. Interview relatives about your family.
2. Investigate other documents or sources for information about your family (such as family records, Navajo tribe members, family trees, role numbers, baby books, land use permits).
3. Create your immediate family's map.
4. Design a symbol for your paternal and maternal lineages or nationalities.
5. Extend your research to include your larger family.
6. Create an extended family map.
7. Create a legend below your map to explain symbols.
8. Write an autobiography of your family. Include information about maternal grandmother and grandfather and the importance of family.
9. Write an original poem about your heritage. Your poem may be in the language of your choice or bilingual.

HERITAGE TASK (CONTINUED)

Sample Format for Family Map



Instructions	Legend
Father on left, mother on right. Order of children: oldest to youngest (left to right). Use a □ for male and a ○ for female. Use a ⌒ to indicate marriage. Use a = for year born.	□ Male ○ Female ⌒ Marriage tie A Anglo born to Bitter Water Clan born to Near the Mountain Clan

Sample Poem

Pond by My Grandmother's House

By Terry Tsaipi

Mrs. Barlow's class, Chinle Junior High School

I'm walking by my grandmother's pond.
Above me, I see the sun rays stretching over the clouds.
Around me, the water sparkles like diamonds.
Below me, lies Mother Earth holding crystal clear water.
I smell the wet ground and taste the crispness of the air.
I hear the wind whistling through the trees.

I hear myself breathing against the wind.
I throw little rocks at the water, and
I hear the splashes of the water.

I can taste the dry wind going down my throat.
I can still smell the wet dirt from the wet rain.

I remember the time when I was walking with my grandmother to the sheep.

I'm walking by my grandmother's pond.
Above me, the afternoon sun heats the afternoon sky.
Around me, grandmother's childhood memories.
Below me, I study my grandmother's footsteps.
I feel peaceful, brave and young.

Shimáéí bibe'ek'id bíighahgóó yishńá
Shíká di éí jdhoma'éí adinídíín k'os bikáá'gine
Shimagóó tó diston ółan nihnilo
Shiyangi shimá nihnedzáán tó nilţólí nahnlingo dah yoo'áá
Shí łeezh ditlé'ígíí yishchin dóó yishţjh nílch'i sik'asígíí nahnlingo. Shí nílch'i éí áłtsoolígíí tsin bitahgóó diistsa'.

Níyol bik'jj' nídlidahígíí diistsa'
Shí tsé yáhígíí tó biyi'jj' tsehastl'idgo tó yáhníłdhaazígíí diistsa'

Shí shidáyí' gíyaah t'áá'íishjéhí hóóltaaí nahalin
Nahaltsin bits'ádhéshní łeezh ditlé' ígíí yish chin

Shí dóó shimáéí dibáhgóó yiit'anhgo bínáhnáih

Shimáéí bibe'ek'id bíighahgóó yishńá
Shidadi jdhoma'éí alné ní'áá góó bik'ijh' yábiyi'jj' daozhi
Shimagóó éí shimáéí áłchíní nitł jdéí yáah bínáhnáih
Shiyanjj' éiyá shimáéí nihideé'áá nahí'
Shí éí shitah yá'áhoo t'áá dóó
Shiyi'di éí shimáéí bínáhnáih

HERO TASK

STANDARDS: Students will communicate their academic, social, and affective knowledge and understanding to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 5-8

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Investigating the World

TASK OVERVIEW: For this task the student will use the writing process to publish a fictional or nonfictional narrative about a "hero," whether personal or well known. The book will incorporate the visual symbolism of a mandala, or circular symbolic design, depicting the character traits of the chosen "hero." The student will also design an end-of-the-book activity. A student may list key vocabulary words in a glossary and hide them within a linear drawing. Or, after assigning each letter of the alphabet a numerical value, a student may use these values to write vocabulary words in a secret code, and then into a message.

TIME: 3-4 weeks

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: In this task you will write a narrative story as fiction or nonfiction about a person you see as a hero. You will examine the values, strengths, achievements, and struggles of this person, as we did when we examined the personality traits and life of the main character in the novel "Island of the Blue Dolphins."

RE-EXPLANATION FOR STUDENTS: You will complete this book individually or with a partner and present or share the final copy with the class. To accomplish this task you will need to:

1. Complete the class study of the novel in cooperative groups.

2. Brainstorm the thoughts and reactions of one of the characters to an event in the story to determine personality traits.

3. Recall the reasons people were introduced as heroes in art class, music class, and in the thematic unit on heroes presented by the librarian.

4. Brainstorm various types of heroes and why they are considered to be independent, responsible, creative or courageous, including people in your family or community.

5. Write in your journal about the reasons why you consider this person to be a hero.

HERO TASK (CONTINUED)

6. Design a mandala of symbols which reflects traits of your hero and then write a simile.

7. Write and illustrative your narrative fiction or nonfiction piece.

8. Design a cover, using the mandala if you wish.

9. Design an end-of-book activity.

10. Share your work with others and the teacher as you develop it to receive feedback. Present the final copy.

HOUSEHOLD DATA SURVEY TASK

STANDARDS: Students will solve a variety of real-life problems and represent mathematical situations verbally, numerically, graphically, and symbolically using manipulatives; problem solving and computation strategies as needed throughout the strands of mathematics.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 5-8

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Collecting and Representing Real Data

TASK OVERVIEW: Students will make a numerical prediction about household data based on their own experiences, then collect and represent data that either confirms or refutes their prediction. Students will have one week to complete the task with daily class time provided for discussion and revision. Teachers will discuss the prompt and brainstorm possible survey questions with the entire class prior to individual student work.

TIME: 1 week

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: You will formulate a single prediction about household data and then conduct a survey of friends or neighbors to determine your findings. You will prepare written and oral presentations that must include the following information:

1. A numerical **prediction** about some type of data in a "typical" household based on your own experience.
2. A **survey question** that you will ask individuals.
3. A description of your **data collection methods**, including people surveyed.
4. The **data** from all people surveyed — organized and displayed with appropriate charts or tables.
5. A **summary of your findings** and the accuracy of your prediction.
6. Your **conclusions** about the data in a "typical" household.

Adapted from Peter Ryan, Stanislaus County Math Portfolio Project

MURAL TASK

STANDARDS: Students will be able to communicate mathematical concepts as they demonstrate their understanding through modeling, identifying, and extending concepts. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 6-8

PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Investigating the World

TIME: 2-3 weeks

TASK OVERVIEW: For this task, each sixth grade student will have the opportunity to draw a design for a mural to be painted on the exterior of Building A. The design must include a geometric, Southwestern border framing a Navajo scene. The scene should reflect pride and respect for life on the Navajo Nation. The finished mural will be 80 inches by 160 inches. The student will develop a proposal for the design that includes a description of its cultural value, an estimate of cost and production time. The project will be a part of mathematics, art, culture, and language arts classes, and will be included in students' portfolios.

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: You will each have the opportunity to design a mural that may be chosen to decorate the exterior of Building A. You will create a border design and a drawing of a Navajo scene to be painted inside of the border. You will also figure the cost of materials and the estimated time of completion for your mural. You will develop a proposal for the design that includes a description of its cultural value, an estimated cost, and production timeline. All school students and personnel will vote for two winning murals. All sixth grade students will participate in painting the murals this spring. To accomplish this task, you must:

1. Use the cinderblock paper to design a geometric, repeating border for the mural.

2. Interview at least 10 people about their choice for a Navajo scene that best reflects the local area and culture of the Navajo Nation. Examples might include specific landmarks, people, cultural activities, recreation, live stock, plants, legends, and more. Graph the results of your interviews on graph papers.

3. Based on the results of your interviews, draw a scene that you feel best represents the local area and culture of the Navajo Nation.

4. Color your scene. (Choose from pastels, paint, markers or other color media.)

5. Calculate the cost of material using cost sheets from three local sources. Include cost of paint, primer, brushes, and any other needed material. Choose the most cost-efficient materials to complete your design.

MURAL TASK (CONTINUED)

6. Share your design with classmates. Decide if you should submit your design individually or combine your border or scene with another student's border or scene.

7. Draw your border and scene to proportional scale using tagboard or posterboard that your teacher provides.

8. Write up a proposal for your design. Include estimated cost, time of completion, and the cultural value of your project.

9. Write a reflection discussing what you've learned about math and about your culture from the task.

RUG TASK

STANDARD: Students will be able to communicate mathematical concepts as they demonstrate their understanding through modeling, identifying, and extending concepts. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate, and produce knowledge for basic life skills.

TASK GRADE RANGE: Grades 4-5

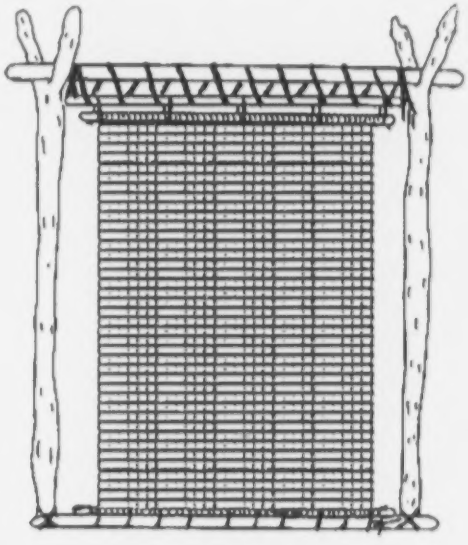
PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN: Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information

TASK OVERVIEW: For the task the student will design two rug patterns and calculate time of weaving based on the complexity of one of the patterns.

TIME: 2-3 days

PROMPT TO STUDENTS: In this task you will design two rugs and figure out how long it will take to weave them. To accomplish this task you will need to:

1. Design a rug using a grid.
2. Calculate how long it will take to weave and show your mathematical reasoning.
3. Use a given pattern to design a second rug.
4. Color the new rug.
5. Calculate time needed for weaving both rugs.
6. Evaluate your designs.



Grid Example

RUG TASK (CONTINUED)

RE-EXPLANATION FOR STUDENTS: You are spending the summer in the canyon with grandmother. In order to earn some money for new school clothes, grandmother has offered to weave a rug for you to sell, if you will create the design.

1. Design your rug in the grid. (Students are provided with a grid.)

2. Grandmother says it will take her five minutes to weave each row. How many minutes will it take her to weave your rug? Count the number of rows and multiply by five. Show your work.

3. A tourist to the canyon came through on a jeep tour and stopped to watch your grandmother weave. She was so impressed with grandmother's weaving that she asked grandmother to weave her a rug using her favorite pattern. Design a rug using the pattern provided. (Students are provided with a pattern.) Use only this pattern in as many ways as you want.

4. Color in the tourist rug using two or three colors.

5. The tourist wants to know how long it will take grandmother to complete her rug so that she will know when to come back and get it. Use the following information to figure out how long it will take grandmother to complete the rug.
   * A rug that has 2 colors in it takes 7 minutes to weave 1 row.
   * A rug that has 3 colors in it takes 9 minutes to weave 1 row.

   Show your work.

6. Keeping in mind that there are 60 minutes in an hour, estimate how many hours it will take grandmother to weave the rug. Show your work.

7. If grandmother works on the rug 2 hours a day, calculate how many days it will take her to weave the rug. Show your work.

8. Evaluate your design. What have you learned about weaving or about using math in everyday life?

PART THREE
WORKSHOP GUIDE

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

This *Workshop Guide* is designed with the assumption that you, the presenter, have considerable knowledge and background experience to carry on productive discussions of the issues involved. You may need to rely on prior knowledge and/or on the background information presented in Part One of the *Guide* to facilitate discussions about the overheads. Only brief highlights are presented in the body of the workshop guide. For additional resources, please refer to the Suggested Reading List in Section Three, Part One.

This workshop is designed for staff developers and assessment planners to help guide teachers, administrators, and others participating in designing assessment tasks. As noted in our introduction, it is critical that performance tasks designed to assess what students from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds learn be developed so students can accurately demonstrate what they know and are able to do. If performance tasks are designed without consideration of the format and content features, they may reflect a bias against certain students or groups of students because of their linguistic, cultural or experiential backgrounds; such tasks would have little validity for these students.

In this workshop, participants are given background information and then asked to review tasks. Using a set of criteria and questions, they are to determine what aspects of the tasks will not accommodate the learning needs of students from "non-mainstream" backgrounds. Through the conversations that ensue, participants gain a good understanding of task features that they need to consider when designing tasks. Through the review activity and discussion, they can also modify tasks already developed, so that equitable assessment for all learners can be ensured.

PURPOSE:

To help assessment task developers understand the features of performance tasks that must be considered to make them valid and equitable for all learners

GOALS:

1. To enable participants to understand key elements that contribute to assessment bias

2. To build the capacity of assessment developers to design and modify performance tasks that guarantee equity for all students

Suggested Audience

Information and guidance provided through this workshop should be seen as preliminary, but the discussions that can result will allow further and more in-depth consideration of important issues as assessment development continues. Thus, the workshop is appropriate for teachers and other practitioners who are just beginning to design performance tasks that will provide accurate assessment information on their students. It could also prompt an initial discussion among assessment developers at local and state levels who have designed a comprehensive assessment system but have not yet given adequate attention to the specific features of tasks that may result in assessment bias. The activity could likewise be used with pre-service teachers, likely to be more involved in the development of classroom, school or district assessments than their predecessors.

Resources Needed:

Equipment

Overhead Transparency Projector
Blank Overhead Transparencies
Chart Paper
Markers and Tape

Support Materials

Workshop Guide
Background Information
Participant Handouts
Overhead Transparencies
(Templates provided in Appendix)

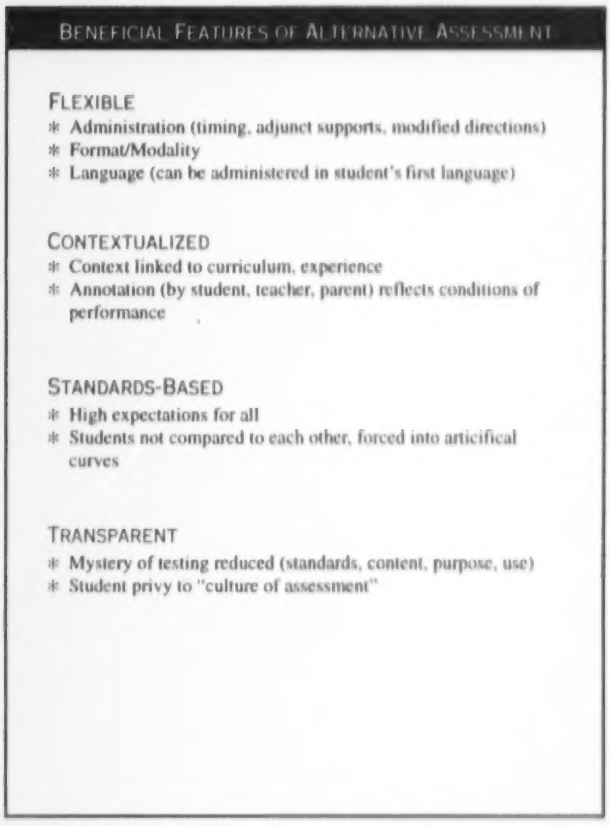
Time Required: 2 1/2 - 3 hours

Workshop Guidelines Section I: Introduction of Performance-based Assessment

It is important to provide a general context for the concepts explored in the workshop by leading off with an introductory discussion about alternative or performance-based assessment. This should be interactive and engage participants with questions that establish what they know and do not know about such an approach to assessment. Teachers may be asked to comment on their current classroom assessments that are performance-based. Others involved in the development of performance assessments could comment on their experiences and help explain what a performance task looks like. A discussion of the advantages of using performance tasks can be guided with **Transparency #1**.

TRANSPARENCY #1
BENEFICIAL FEATURES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Because the administration of performance assessments is not as strictly standardized as that of traditional standardized tests, flexibility is possible. This can provide the opportunity to learn more about students' progress in learning, because the administration procedures can be modified; students can respond in a way that will generate the most accurate reflection of their learning; and, at times, students who are more comfortable using their first language can do so.


BENEFICIAL FEATURES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT
FLEXIBLE
* Administration (timing, adjunct supports, modified directions)
* Format/Modality
* Language (can be administered in student's first language)
CONTEXTUALIZED
* Context linked to curriculum, experience
* Annotation (by student, teacher, parent) reflects conditions of performance
STANDARDS-BASED
* High expectations for all
* Students not compared to each other, forced into articifical curves
TRANSPARENT
* Mystery of testing reduced (standards, content, purpose, use)
* Student privy to "culture of assessment"

It is equally important that the tasks students are asked to complete for assessment purposes fit with their classroom activities. For example, if students are expected in a performance task to use certain problem-solving strategies, they should have spent considerable classroom time exploring and trying out these strategies with a variety of problems. In the course of these classroom experiences, teachers need to be alert to the different approaches that students use, so that they are aware that students will bring different styles, approaches, and uses of language and symbol systems based on their life experiences to the task at hand. For this reason, it is also important to annotate the performance carefully so that the specific conditions under which the student performed the task are clear, and idiosyncratic approaches to the task based on those conditions are noted as part of the anecdotal record.

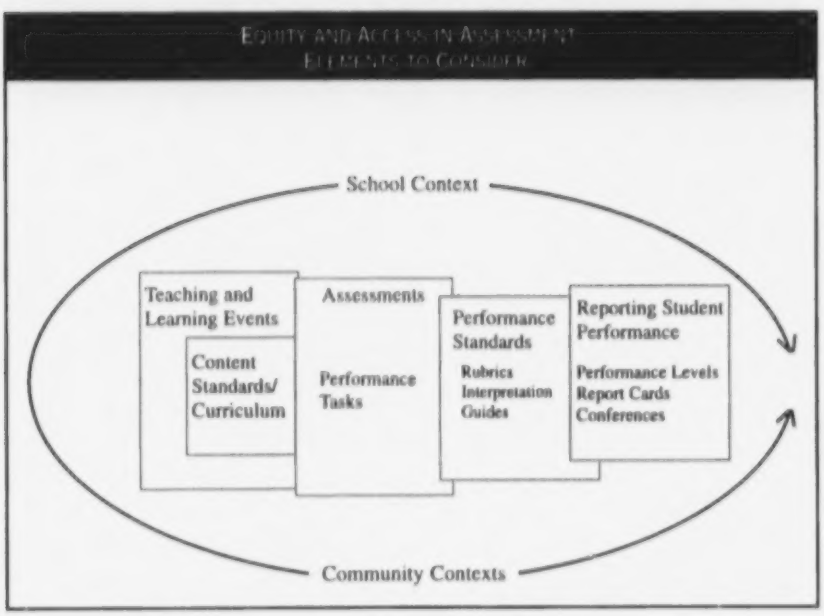
When assessment tasks are designed with a pre-specified set of curriculum or content standards, then all students can be assessed with regard to their progress against those standards. They are not compared to other students in some normative sample. This is advantageous for all students, particularly for students whose life experiences — especially those related to the number of languages they are learning or to cultural factors — differ from those of the mainstream culture for which classroom instruction is most often designed.

Tests have traditionally been something of a mystery to students. They often do not know how tests get developed, what they are expected to do on them, what qualifies as "good" work or how the information will be used. Tests seem like "secret" devices that may cost them dearly in terms of rewards and their own self-esteem. Using alternative or performance-based assessments, teachers, and students are well aware of the standards that are being assessed and how performances are scored or rated. Students frequently participate to develop standards or scoring rubrics so that they can become very well informed about the content of their work in a particular domain, what counts and what approaches may help them meet those standards. Students and teachers both discuss "performances" and evaluate them to arrive at a consensus about the quality of the performance. All this makes the assessments "transparent" to students. The cover of the mystery box is removed, so students have access to greater opportunities to learn.

SECTION II:
DEVELOPMENT OF
EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT

TRANSPARENCY #2
EQUITY AND ACCESS IN ASSESSMENT:
ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

As indicated in the diagram, there is much to consider for educators who are interested in developing equitable assessments. Grant Wiggins (1994), who has written extensively on authentic assessment, uses an interesting term to discuss an alternative climate for testing or assessment. He refers to the need for approaches to be "respectful" and explains that when individuals are not: (1) told about the intent or methods; (2) given the opportunity to explain their responses; (3) given timely, accurate, and helpful feedback; (4) provided with adequate resources or time and opportunity to practice, refine, and master a task, then the approach cannot be considered respectful.



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It is also important to consider whether students have access to rich experiences in their classroom to enable them to perform a challenging task in any specific content area (or a task that integrates content areas) which results in an accurate assessment of their learning.

Using multiple approaches to assessment or allowing students to use a variety of ways to demonstrate what they know leads to more equitable approaches to assessment. And, letting students in on the purposes of assessments and the criteria for evaluating them enhances their chances of being able to produce a valid measure of their progress. One must also consider how assessment results are scored, i.e., what criteria are used to judge a performance. If a writing sample is to be scored on how well it communicates, for example, should a student who is learning English be penalized if he or she interjects words from his or her native language to enhance the communication? One would certainly hope not. Scoring strictly against a set of prespecified criteria — using a rubric, for example — grants the assessor more objectivity.

TRANSPARENCY #3
GUIDELINES FOR EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT: WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS

The next two transparencies (and handouts for participants), guide the development of equitable assessments. The first provides guidelines regarding ways to construct, administer, and interpret assessments. They are only guidelines, however; much more discussion and some research will be required.

GUIDELINES FOR EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT

LINK assessment content to student experiences in and out of the classroom.

CONSTRUCT OR MODIFY (Capitalize on flexibility) assessment tasks/items to suit students' known ways of thinking and demonstrating their learning.

CONSIDER language demands of assessments, students' competence to respond, and ways to expand opportunities to build necessary language proficiency.

BE SURE that students understand what it is they are expected to do on an assessment. Re-phrase, translate, give synonyms, use examples, paraphrase as necessary.

ALLOW students the time they need to complete an assessment.

ALLOW students choices whenever possible.

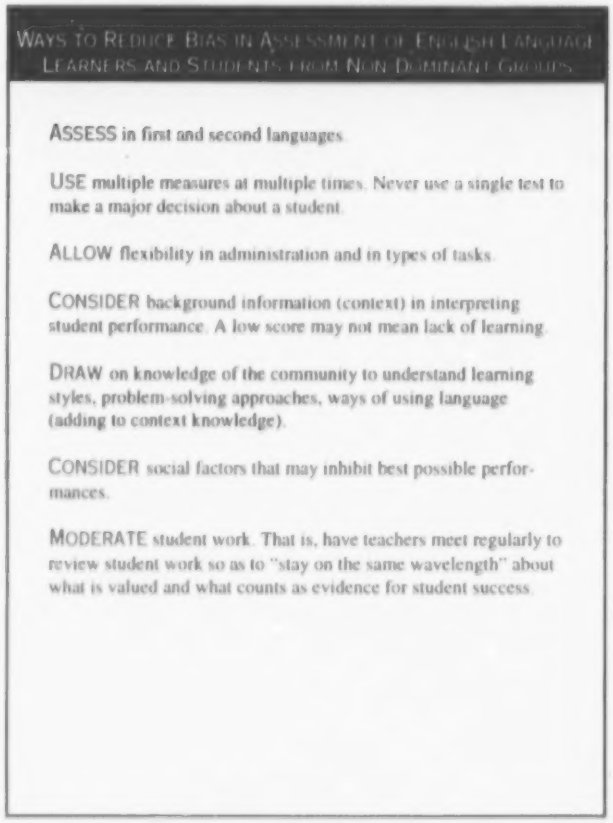
ALWAYS USE more than one measure to evaluate student learning. Never rely on a single assessment to make a major decision, particularly with English-language learners.

DOCUMENT contexts of assessment (conditions, supports, mediation, time required, particular problems/solutions).

MODERATE assessments with other teachers (to aid in interpretation of student work) -- especially including teachers or paraprofessionals from students' own linguistic/cultural communities.

TRANSPARENCY #4
WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS IN ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS) AND STUDENTS FROM NON-DOMINANT GROUPS

The presenter should get the group to discuss the importance of avoiding content bias in assessments by drawing on the local community for content that would make sense to the students and give them more "authentic" ways to handle the task they are asked to perform. Students in southern California, for example, had difficulty with a story they were asked to read about an avalanche. Since many of them had never even seen snow, they were unaware of the dangers involved in such an event. Bias can be reflected both in the content of the task and in the format as well, that is, in the kinds of questions that are asked and the strategies that need to be used to perform the task. Whether students are allowed to work together, whether they are allowed to choose the mode of response — such factors influence the assessment as well.


WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS IN ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS FROM NON-DOMINANT GROUPS
ASSESS in first and second languages.
USE multiple measures at multiple times. Never use a single test to make a major decision about a student.
ALLOW flexibility in administration and in types of tasks.
CONSIDER background information (context) in interpreting student performance. A low score may not mean lack of learning.
DRAW on knowledge of the community to understand learning styles, problem-solving approaches, ways of using language (adding to context knowledge).
CONSIDER social factors that may inhibit best possible performances.
MODERATE student work. That is, have teachers meet regularly to review student work so as to "stay on the same wavelength" about what is valued and what counts as evidence for student success.

SECTION III:
REVIEW OF TASKS

TRANSPARENCY #5
DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

This transparency reflects task designs drawn from the community context. They can be introduced by briefly discussing the strategies used and the task shell approach (Part II). The tasks have been developed by teachers in collaboration with Far West Laboratory, as a part of two district portfolio projects. The sample tasks can be used to evaluate how bias has been reduced by a task's particular context and format, and to discuss what connection might be made between assessment tasks and the local context of the district or school.

TASKS	GRADE RANGE	SUMMARY	PERFORMANCE TASK DOMAIN	ASSESSMENT STRATEGY	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Generic Reading	4-6	Students read, interpret, and evaluate a literary or non-fiction text.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Generic Social Studies	4-6	Students summarize important features of one historical period through writing and graphics.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Heritage	4-8	Students research their clan and write a narrative and poem about their heritage.	Investigating the World	Strategies 5 & 6 Integrate students' ways of knowing with school expectations for learning.	Strategy 6 applies because task was developed to assess school and Navajo ways of communicating used for district and state reporting.
Hero	5-8	Students write a narrative piece about a hero in their own lives.	Investigating the World	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used for district and state reporting.
Household Data Survey	5-8	Students make a numerical prediction and collect, represent and analyze data, confirming or refuting prediction.	Collecting and Representing Real Data	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Used in several districts.
Mural	6-8	Students design a mural representing Navajo culture and calculate costs and time of completion.	Investigating the World	Strategy 4 Make connections between school knowledge and local context.	Developed specifically for a new school. Used for district and state reporting.
Rug	4-5	Students design a rug and calculate time of completion based on complexity of design.	Examining, Representing, and Evaluating Information.	Strategy 5 Integrate students' ways of knowing with school expectations for learning.	The story-like structure of task parallels Navajo discourse style, as does the actual context (earning money for clothes).

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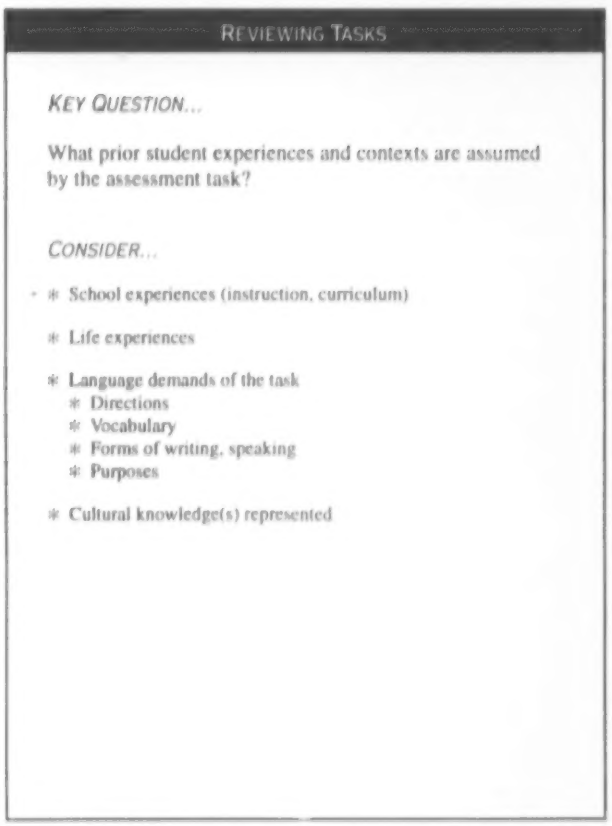
TRANSPARENCY #6
REVIEWING TASKS

This should be the active part of the workshop. Participants can work in small groups to discuss the tasks. The number selected will depend on the number of participants; the presenter can decide whether it is useful to show **Transparency #5** and give participants an overview of the available tasks. **Transparency #6** lists the key question for the workshop activity. The directions for the activity are given on **Transparency #7**. These transparencies should be duplicated as handouts. If there are between 3 and 6 participants in a group, they can be asked to assume the roles of facilitator, recorder, and reporter, to move the activity along. (*Each participant will need an individual copy of each task to be reviewed.*)



TRANSPARENCY #7
DIRECTIONS

While the groups are engaged in this activity, the facilitator should rotate around the room and visit the groups, note the points that are made, and assist with information if participants need information about a particular aspect of the task or issues involved in the questions that are posed. The facilitator should remain on the sidelines. This is very important opportunity for participants to engage in a thoughtful examination so tasks and the features can be given careful attention if such tasks are to provide fair and valid information about all students' learning and their own ability to engage thoughtfully with challenging tasks. Time should be allotted for a large group discussion about potential task adaptation and next steps. **Transparency #8** can be used to summarize workshop principles.

DIRECTIONS FOR TASK ACTIVITY 1

TASK REVIEW

* Read the task individually. What are the linguistic, cultural and academic assumptions of the task? What school experiences does the task assume students have already had? What are the language demands of the task? Consider your own teaching situations and local contexts.
* Discuss the task assumptions. Identify aspects of the task that promote access and equity for students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
* Identify potential weaknesses of the task.
* Record strengths and weaknesses on chart paper and choose a reporter for large group sharing.
* Large Group Discussion: What could be done to make the task appropriate for your students?

TRANSPARENCY #8
REVIEW

WHAT IS EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT?

* The opportunity to show what you have learned...
* Being assessed on what you have been taught/learned...
* Having assessments used for appropriate purposes...
* Getting the chance to try again...
* Not being judged on the basis of one test...

Appendix
Overhead Transparency Templates

Beneficial Features of Alternative Assessment

Flexible

* Administration (timing, adjunct supports, modified directions)
* Format/Modality
* Language (can be administered in student's first language)

Contextualized

* Context linked to curriculum, experience
* Annotation (by student, teacher, parent) reflects conditions of performance

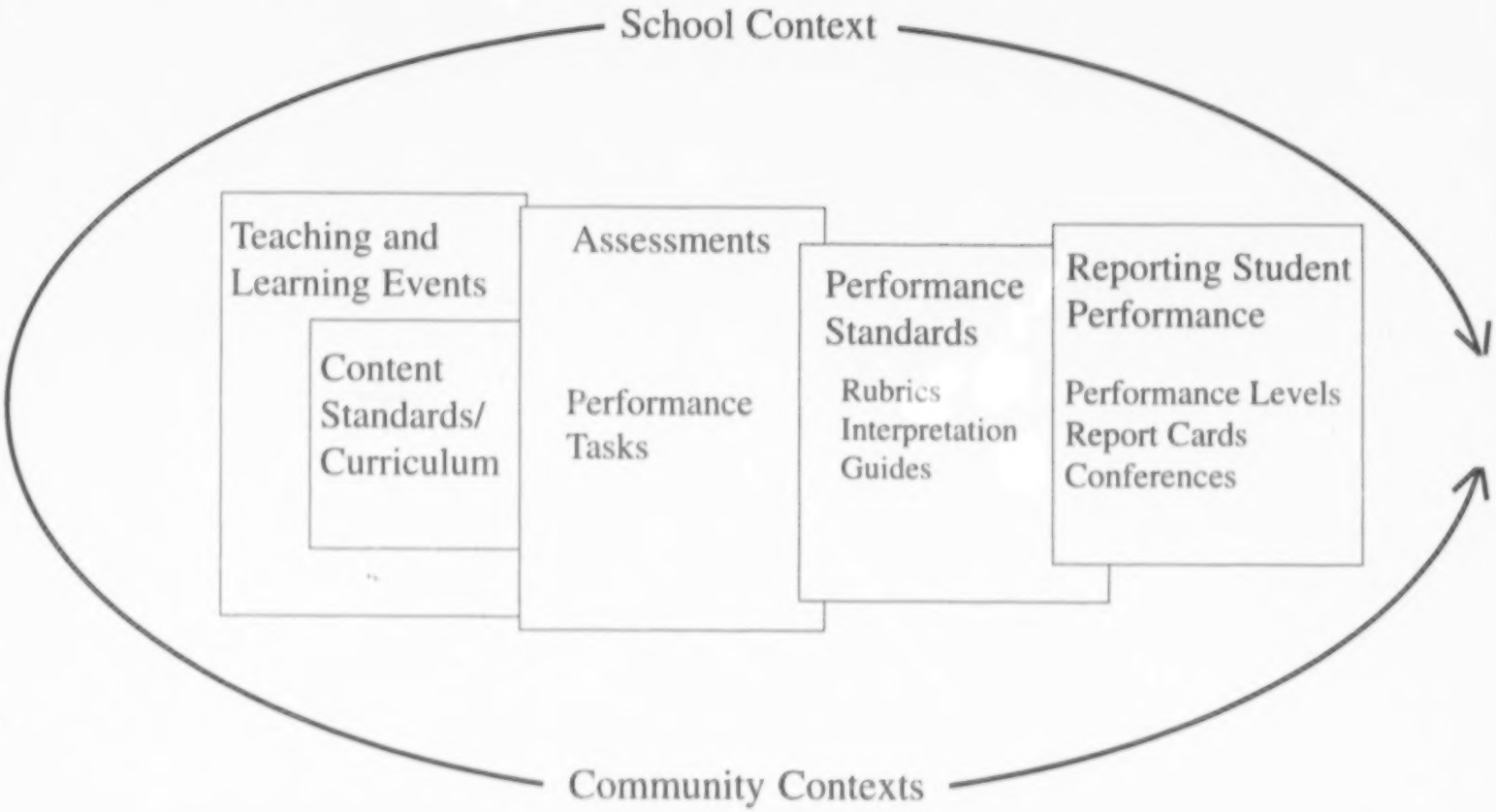
Standards-Based

* High expectations for all
* Students not compared to each other, forced into articifical curves

Transparent

* Mystery of testing reduced (standards, content, purpose, use)
* Student privy to "culture of assessment"

Equity and Access in Assessment: Elements to Consider



GUIDELINES FOR EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT

LINK assessment content to student experiences in and out of the classroom.

CONSTRUCT OR MODIFY (Capitalize on flexibility) assessment tasks/items to suit students' known ways of thinking and demonstrating their learning.

CONSIDER language demands of assessments, students' competence to respond, and ways to expand opportunities to build necessary language proficiency.

BE SURE that students understand what it is they are expected to do on an assessment. Re-phrase, translate, give synonyms, use examples, paraphrase as necessary.

ALLOW students the time they need to complete an assessment.

ALLOW students choices whenever possible.

ALWAYS USE more than one measure to evaluate student learning. Never rely on a single assessment to make a major decision, particularly with English-language learners.

DOCUMENT contexts of assessment (conditions, supports, mediation, time required, particular problems/solutions).

MODERATE assessments with other teachers (to aid in interpretation of student work)— especially including teachers or paraprofessionals from students' own linguistic/cultural communities.

Ways to Reduce Bias in Assessment of English Language Learners and Students from Non-Dominant Groups

ASSESS in first and second languages.

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KEY QUESTION...

What prior student experiences and contexts are assumed by the assessment task?

CONSIDER...

* School experiences (instruction, curriculum)
* Life experiences
* Language demands of the task
  * Directions
  * Vocabulary
  * Forms of writing, speaking
  * Purposes
* Cultural knowledge(s) represented

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